



In the PINES

By T. Lee Brown

Mama is cry

In last week's episode, I shared the story of one Friday in May several years back. My husband headed off on his bicycle to work; our 19-month-old son and I embarked on our weekly routine of taking the city bus to a certain diner. Along the way, we encountered an aggressive, aggravated guy who willfully chucked a big ol' plank of wood on the sidewalk as we walked by, nearly hitting us.

Instead of confronting Plank Dude, I decided to mentally give him an "Aggro Pass." Normally, I should probably be ashamed to admit, I was the kind of person who leapt straight to judgment and anger when provoked. OK, maybe I still am, sometimes — mostly harmless, but often annoying, like a chatty gray squirrel with an Irish temper.

On that day, for some reason, I felt acutely aware that Plank Dude could be going through grief, trauma, withdrawal, or pain. I invented the pass just for this occasion — an imaginary Get Out of Jail Free card that would get me safely past my anger into something resembling compassion, and let the incident go.

My son and I took the bus to the diner, singing all the way. The familiar servers and hosts greeted us, always delighted to interact with the radiant, smiling child. We ate our eggs and bacon and scones, played with plastic dinosaurs. Paid our bill.

Our weekly routine continued: I held him up to touch the thrillingly spiky, dangerous-looking posts of the wrought-iron fence. Then he gestured across the street to the apartment building with motorbikes out front. "Motorcycle," he announced in his baby-toddler voice.

I glanced at my flip-phone to check the time. We had a good fifteen minutes to kill before our bus came. I noticed a voicemail was waiting, too, but didn't recognize the number. Probably a sales call.

We played in the thin May leaves, leftover from winter, that mounded around parked cars on a quiet side street. With the child thoroughly occupied, I went ahead and listened to the voicemail.

"Mrs. Berger, this is _____," a female voice began. Like many a sales-robot, they got my name wrong. My husband was Berger. When we married I kept my maiden name.

"I'm calling from Oregon Health Sciences University hospital," the voice continued.

This was not a sales call. From this point on, I listened as though from a great distance. Obviously something bad had happened. Why would my husband be taken across the river to big, fancy OHSU instead of a hospital close to our home or to his office? The bad thing must be really, really bad.

These thoughts sailed overhead in bursts while I slowed my breathing and kept an eye on Gusty. Panic must not take over.

I thought of recent dreams I'd had, dreams in which my husband lay in a hospital bed in our bedroom, comatose, while I measured the bathroom to figure out whether a wheelchair would fit. The phone call seemed to be following some kind of etheric script, a script my sleeping mind had somehow got hold of and begun to read in the wrong order.

My husband, the woman said, had been in a bicycle accident and sustained a severe traumatic brain injury. He was in the brain trauma ward in the intensive care unit. I called the number provided; her voicemail picked up. I left a message and returned to the leaves.

Then I took our son in my arms. Did I tell him Dada was in the hospital? Did he notice Mama was in shock? I don't

remember. I know we walked to the bus stop. I know we ran back and forth beneath the telephone pole archway nearby, just like every Friday.

We settled down on the bench next to an older man. After exchanging the brief hellos of bus stops, I told him about the phone call I'd just received. The old man grunted.

"It happens," he said. The bus was late and crowded. I stood in the aisle, hanging onto a pole, holding my son's hand. Near us sat a woman around my age with her 4-year-old child. A motorized wheelchair with many straps and gadgets held him upright. His eyes seemed kind and curious.

She said his name was Angel. She said it with such tenderness, I could see he really was her angel, her light from above.

We said goodbye to Angel and his mother. My son remembered to thank the driver as we exited the bus. We walked one block, and then I sat down on the sidewalk. He sat down next to me and twirled a leaf, very concerned.

"Is Mama cry?" he asked.

Yes, Mama is cry. I methodically called all our car-owning friends who lived nearby, asking for a ride to the hospital. I left four messages. Mama and child walked home hand-in-hand, avoiding the house where a few hours previous I'd mentally handed out the Aggro Pass. After all, the guy might've just lost his mother, might be kicking a drug habit... might've just gotten a call from a hospital.

CITY OF SISTERS

COVID-19 Situation Report

By Cory Misley
City Manager

Last Saturday, June 6, Deschutes County was approved by the state to move into Phase 2 of re-opening and will be in this phase for a minimum of 21 days. Some key changes include an increase to gathering limits of 50 people indoors 100 people outdoors, up to 250 people in venues with six-feet of physical distance and other measures in place, restaurant and bar curfews extended to midnight, and increased travel will be allowed throughout Oregon although staying local is still recommended.

Current state information on re-opening can be found at govstatus.egov.com/or-covid-19.

The City of Sisters is still providing some services in an adjusted way. The Creekside Campground opened in early June and has been operating under a contingency plan allowing only one-third of campsites to be open (as well as other measures). All city playgrounds have been closed and will likely remain so under state restrictions in Phase 2.

City operations and customer service never ceased, although City Hall has been

and remains closed to the public until Phase 3. City Council and committee meetings have resumed in person for June, subject to social distancing and with the public participating via conference call (specific meeting information available on the front page of the City website).

For temporary policies the City wants to extend beyond its emergency declaration (currently until June 24) it must convert administrative orders into Council resolutions and has been preparing to do so leading up to that date.

One key administrative order (enabled by the emergency declaration) was the right-of-way pilot Parklet Program that has been implemented by a handful of businesses. The feedback has been very positive and it is anticipated that this program will continue for the rest of this summer, subject to refinements.

The City continues to stay informed and active with the phased re-opening. Balancing health and the economy has and continues to be the focus. Resources as well as updates from the City of Sisters can be found at ci.sisters.or.us/administration/page/coronavirus-information-and-resources.

Learn more at www.ci.sisters.or.us

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Sisters Christian Academy began as a dream nearly 24 years ago in the minds of loving parents and grandparents with a desire to give students an excellent education rooted in the truth of Jesus Christ. Through the years, there have been changes in administration, support staff, teachers and students. Now, we humbly close the doors to this amazing little school and celebrate all of the lives that have been influenced. Our hearts are full of gratitude for all who have partnered with us over the years!

Thank you:
parents and grandparents who entrusted your children to us; students who rose to the challenge of academic and spiritual excellence and taught us about faith, hope, love and joy in the process; wonderfully creative and compassionate teachers; faithful and generous donors; the supportive and encouraging community of Sisters.

Thank you! We could not have done it without your love, partnership, support and prayers!

With gratitude,
The Sisters Christian Academy School Board